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TITLE: Elements of Effective HIV Programs for Adolescents

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ISSUE: Since the mid-80's schools and youth serving organizations have implemented HIV Prevention Programs for youth in an attempt to eliminate or reduce their sexual risk-taking behavior. However, programs varied in content, length of instruction and type of instructional strategies used. As the field of HIV Prevention began to mature, health education professionals began to ask for a definition of what constituted effective HIV Prevention Education programs for adolescents.

SETTING: **Secondary schools and community-based** youth serving organizations nationwide.

PROJECT: In order to define what constitutes Effective HIV Prevention Education for adolescents Dr. Douglas Kirby, ETR's Senior Research Associate, reviewed 50 educational programs designed to reduce sexual risk-taking behavior among school-aged youth in the United States and wrote a monograph describing his findings. Included in this monograph is a description of nine program elements common to programs that were effective in reducing sexual risk-taking behavior. In addition, ETR Training Department staff have developed a program assessment **tool** that allows program developers and implementors to assess how their programs address each of the nine key elements.

RESULTS: HIV Prevention Program developers and implementors can use these key elements and assessment **tools** to improve the effectiveness of their current HIV Prevention Education programs and practices.

LESSONS LEARNED: Effective HIV Prevention Programs for Adolescents have several elements in common including: 1) a narrow focus; 2) a theoretical grounding in social learning theories; 3) 14 hours of instruction or instruction that takes place in small groups to make more efficient use of time; 4) use of a variety of teaching methods; 5) activities that convey information about risks and protection; 6) instruction on social influences and pressures; 7) reinforcement of individual values and group norms against unprotected sex; 8) activities that model and practice communication and negotiation skills; and 9) effective training of individuals implementing the program.

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